

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

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1. (Currently Amended) A method for maintaining state information for Web pages, comprising:

receiving user input to a Web page via a Web browser at a client device;  
sending an instruction to store user input and a Web page field identifier in a directory server from a background application running on the client device; and  
storing the user input and a corresponding Web page identifier in a the directory server; and  
in response to receiving a user request, via the Web browser, for the Web page, sending a request from the background application running on the client device to the directory server to retrieve the user input and corresponding Web page field identifier,  
wherein ~~when the Web page is next accessed,~~ the user input and corresponding Web page field identifier are retrieved from the directory server.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are specific to a particular Web page.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are common to a plurality of Web pages.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
matching the Web page field identifier to an entry field identifier located in the Web page; and  
inserting the user input into a field associated with the entry field identifier.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving a Web page retrieval request having a Web page identifier identifying the Web page from a Web browser running on the client device;  
sending the Web page identifier to the directory server from the background application running on the client device; and

receiving the user input and Web page field identifier from the directory server in response to sending the Web page identifier from the background application running on the client device.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, further comprising inserting the user input into a field of the Web page corresponding to the Web page field identifier.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user input and the Web page field identifier are stored in a Web page entry of the directory server identified by a user identifier and a Web page identifier.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user input is encrypted before being stored in the directory server.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the Web page field identifier is a HyperText Mark-up Language tag.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the directory server is an LDAP server.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the method is implemented using a plug-in application to a Web browser.

12. (Canceled).

13. (Currently Amended) A computer program product in a computer readable medium for maintaining state information for Web pages, comprising:

first instructions for receiving user input to a Web page via a Web browser at a client device;

second instructions for sending an instruction to store user input and a Web page field identifier in a directory server from a background application running on the client device;

third instructions for storing the user input and a corresponding Web page identifier in a the directory server; and

fourth instructions for sending a request from the background application running on the client device to the directory server to retrieve the user input and corresponding Web page field identifier, in response to receiving a user request, via the Web browser, for the Web page, wherein when the Web page is next accessed, the user input and corresponding Web page field identifier are retrieved from the directory server.

14. (Original) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are specific to a particular Web page.

15. (Original) The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are common to a plurality of Web pages.

16. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising:

~~third~~fifth instructions for matching the Web page field identifier to an entry field identifier located in the Web page; and

~~fourth~~sixth instructions for inserting the user input into a field associated with the entry field identifier.

17. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 13, further comprising:

~~third~~fifth instructions for receiving a Web page retrieval request having a Web page identifier identifying the Web page from a Web browser running on the client device;

~~fourth~~sixth instructions instructions for sending the Web page identifier to the directory server from the background application running on the client device; and

~~fifth~~seventh instructions for receiving the user input and Web page field identifier from the directory server in response to sending the Web page identifier from the background application running on the client device.

18. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 17, further comprising ~~sixth~~eighth instructions for inserting the user input into a field of the Web page corresponding to the Web page field identifier.

19. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 17, further comprising ~~sixth~~eighth instructions for inserting the user input into a field of the web page corresponding to the Web page field identifier.

20. (Canceled).

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for maintaining state information for Web pages, comprising:

a processor;

an input device coupled to the processor; and

a network interface coupled to the processor and to a network, wherein the processor receives user input to a Web page via a Web browser at a client device, and sends an instruction from a background application running on the client device to a directory server, via the network interface, to store the user input and a corresponding Web page field identifier in the directory server, and sends a request from the background application running on the client device to the directory server to retrieve the user input and corresponding Web page field identifier, in response to receiving a user request via the Web browser, for the Web page, wherein ~~when the Web page is next accessed~~, the user input and corresponding Web page field identifier are retrieved from the directory server.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are specific to a particular Web page.

23. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are common to a plurality of Web pages.

24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor matches the Web page field identifier to an entry field identifier located in the Web page and inserts the user input into a field associated with the entry field identifier.

25. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor receives a Web page retrieval request having a Web page identifier identifying the Web page from a Web browser running on the client device via the input device, sends the Web page identifier from the background application running on the client device to the directory server via the network interface, and receives the user input and Web page field identifier from the directory server in response to sending the Web page identifier from the background application running on the client device via the network interface.

26. (Original) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the processor inserts the user input into a field of the Web page corresponding to the Web page field identifier.

27. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the user input and the Web page field identifier are stored in a Web page entry of the directory server identified by a user identifier and a Web page identifier.

28. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor encrypts the user input before the user input is stored in the directory server.

29. (Currently Amended) A method, in a directory server, for maintaining state information for Web pages, comprising:

receiving user input to a Web page from a background application running on a client device; and

storing the user input and a corresponding Web page field identifier received from the background application running on the client device in the directory server, wherein ~~when the Web page is next accessed by the client device~~, the user input and corresponding Web page field identifier are downloaded from the directory server to the client device in response to a user request for a Web page.

30. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are specific to a particular Web page.

31. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the user input and Web page field identifier are common to a plurality of Web pages.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29, further comprising:  
receiving, from the background application running on the client device, a Web page identifier identifying the Web page;  
retrieving the user input and Web page field identifier in response to receiving the Web page ~~identifier~~identifier; and  
sending the user input and Web page field identifier to the background application running on the client device from the directory server.

33. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the user input and the Web page field identifier are stored as a Web page entry identified by a user identifier and a Web page identifier.

34. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the user input is encrypted before being stored.

35. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the Web page field identifier is a HyperText Mark-up Language tag.

36. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the directory server is an LDAP server.

37. (Currently Amended) A method in a data processing system for maintaining state information for a Web page, the method comprising:

receiving a user input to the Web page and an identifier associated with the user input via a Web browser at a client;

sending an instruction from a background application running on the client to store user input to the Web page and the identifier associated with the user input; and

storing the user input to the Web page and the identifier associated with the user input in a server; and

responsive to a subsequent request via the Web browser for the Web page, sending a request from the background application running on the client to the server to retrieve the user input and the identifier from the server.

38. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein the server is a directory server.

39. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein the identifier is a tag from the Web page.

40. (Original) The method of claim 37, further comprising:

Placing the user input retrieved from the server in the Web page using the identifier.